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Tribal Women in COVID-19 and Post Pandemic Social World: A Sociological Study

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Introduction

The Impact of Covid-19 is very varied across the globe. In the context of India, the experiences of Indian people are not uniform and they are also varied across the states, regions, caste, religions, gender, and tribes. The Media, policy Makers, NGOs workers, and philanthropic social organizations played very significant roles during the Covid-19 to provide services and help to the Corona affected people. Doctors, Para-medical staff, Nurses, and ASHA workers also played very great roles these days. However, the most focus was given on the migrant workers, mainstream society on the one hand, but on the other hand, the tribal communities, Nomadic tribes, migrant and isolated local regions from the mainstream of the society are directly and indirectly neglected to provide help and services. On other hand, some tribal villages developed their mechanism and way of life to protect their communities and people from Covid-19 and Pandemic. During the covid, people lost life, resources, rights, and were not able to access the resources and livelihood sources for survival. However, due course of time, wave after waves came and disturb the social, cultural, and economic life of the people. After the third wave, there is hope that there will be a new opening in the post-pandemic social world. People are aspired and hope for life and social world for better present and tomorrow. Thus, how tribal communities struggle and cope- with the pandemic crisis and set up their life struggle in post-pandemic situations is urgently needed to inquire for searching further truth and ground realities. Thus, this study would be an attempt to explore and find out the issues, challenges, and problems faced by local tribal communities in their regional, local and social context for survival during the Covid-10 and post-pandemic era. However, there is a need to explore ground realities to search and reveal the field-based facts from the tribal located communities. How were these communities sustained during this pandemic and what is the situation of these tribal communities after the post-pandemic era?

In the present context, there are different views are emerged on the Covid-19 and its impacts on the people. The COVID-19 (Coronavirus) has affected the day-to-day life of people across the globe. This pandemic has multiple and very diverse impacts on the people across the nations, states, regions, religions, caste, tribes, and gender. This pandemic has not

only affected economical activities but also affected social-cultural, health, and educational activities. This pandemic has made many changes in social life. Working conditions, work from home, lockdown, and left adverse impacts on the global and local economical activities of the people. Social Distancing becomes rules and isolated affected people from society. In the first way of Corona, there were no vaccines availabilities. This pandemic has affected thousands of people, who are either sick or are being killed due to the spread of this disease. This virus is spreading region-wise. Countries are banning gatherings of people to spread and break the exponential curve. Many countries are locking their population and enforcing strict quarantine to control the spread of the havoc of this highly communicable disease. COVID-19 has rapidly affected our day-to-day life (health, social, and economy), businesses, disrupted world trade and movements. This virus creates significant knock-on effects on the daily life of citizens as well as on the global economy. Low-income individuals are more likely to contact the coronavirus and to die from it. Migrant laborers and the poorest of the poor were to face a double burden of the pandemic. In the wake of Covid-19, health experts have often highlighted that compromised health conditions, low immunity, and lack of proper medical facilities make people vulnerable to the virus. Tribal and forest communities are primarily exposed**.** So the government should ensure adequate awareness and healthcare infrastructure to protect their rights and livelihoods. It is impossible in the short run to bring a big change in their health conditions, but the establishment of awareness cells with better sensitization and an adequate supply of health workers to deal with Covid-19 can be a pragmatic option. In view, various views and approaches on the covid-19 Corona pointed out the different perspectives such as this issue is very complex, multidisciplinary, and interdisciplinary in nature to understand in detail. Against this backdrop, this study will attempt to explore and focus on the ground realities of the local tribal communities. The study will attempt to know the impacts on the covid-19 not only on the pandemic first, second and third waves, but also explore the post-pandemic social world of the tribal communities. Thus, this study has scope and importance for providing immediate suggestions and recommendations to the policymakers, developmental agencies, governmental agencies, and NGOs. However, this study has also sociological significance to conduct fieldwork in the tribal communities and enrich knowledge in the sub-field of Sociology of tribe.

Review of literature

The existing studies on the impacts of corona-Covid -19 on the tribal communities are very few in nature. However, an attempt is made to review some relevant studies in this area. As it

is known that the topic of the corona is a new one and most of the information and references are drawn from articles published in journals, and online media like- E papers, E-Journals, Internet sites, and books. Thus, the effort is made to review some following studies in the context of this topic. In the context of Covid-19 and its impacts on women, Unwomen.org pointed out that one of three women in the world faces physical and or sexual abuse mostly by their partner. Since the outbreak of Covid- 19, various reports have shown an increase in violence against women and girls. During this period, the double burden of care and domestic work is posed on the women. Research on the same topic in another country –Pakistan shows the same impact on domestic violence during the pandemic. Pakistani researchers Sana Malik, Khamsa Naeem(2020) emphasize gender-based policy to overcome the vulnerabilities of women and to protect them economically, psychologically, and physically during the post-pandemic period.

Another study of Kirti Kapoor, Shobha Suri on the "Covid-19: public health is the question of National Security" focus on strengthening global mechanism, medical advancement, innovation, capacity building (to face such pandemic in future) global coordination to minimize the impact of such pandemic in future. The article "the "invisible" among the marginalized: do gender and intersectionality matter in the Covid-19 response?" Written by Manisha Datta, Drishti Agarwal M.Shivkami pointed out that the uninformed decision of lockdown made many people suffer. Extreme hardship was faced by Adiwasi's families, because of no wages, no savings, and widespread malnutrition. This study pointed out the issues, challenges faced by tribal communities. In the same context, the author expresses the need to analyze the impact of Covid through an Intersectional Approach. Thinking of population groups as "homogeneous units" such as all women; all migrants, etc. will overlook the several layers and experiences of the impact of the pandemic. The Article of Lisa Bowleg used the following phrases and terms such as; "We are not all in this together: on covid19 Intersectionality and structural inequality," written by says-the phrase-"We are all together in this" is not correct- as it oversimplifies the complex structure of society that leads some strata of society towards poverty. From a different perspective, "Covi19: Risk to global food security" written by David Laborde, Will Martin, Johan Swinnen, Rob Vos published in Science magazine, focuses on the impact of covid on food security, on the poor population of India. It emphasizes the result of sudden lockdown and the closer of school feeding programs. It says that such schemes are the safety net of our country. According to the article, all four Pillars of food security are affected by the pandemic. Thinking about Covid 19 restrictions - from a Human Rights perspective is interesting. In "A virtual roundtable on Covid 19, and

Human Rights" human rights watch researcher Joseph J Amon and Margaret Wruth**,** says that during this pandemic, the risk to public health is very high. So, some human rights should be curtailed. Imposition of home quarantine or social distancing is ok. At the same time, a careful watch on any type of discrimination and non-transparency should be kept. Respect for human dignity can be fostered during this crisis. According to Illyas, A (2020) in "Covid19 pandemic: the emergence of a new geopolitical perspective " sustainable development policy institute, this crisis is marching the world towards decoupling and de-globalization. The old structure of society is gradually shifting towards a new society. The author primarily focuses on financial structure or economy based on local governance. Basit A(2020**)** "Covid Pandemic: an opportunity for the terrorist group," Says that since the outbreak of covid has been at forefront of terrorist groups' social media messaging, spinning the spread of the contagion as God's wrath on their enemies, extremist groups are spreading hatred and the end of time narrative. An article published in the American Journal of Economics (2020) studies the impact of Covid 19 on Poverty. It states that covid 19 pandemic could return the poverty levels similar to those recorded 30 years ago. Those who are without a formal contract, i.e. Daily wage laborers or self-employed people will suffer the most. Ambedkarian perspective is focused on the Marxist explanation of this pandemic. According to the article published in Economic and Political Weekly, Societies are formed by classes and not individuals. Thus, all societies have two classes-working class and leisure class. The impact of any change is different on both classes. Further, it says that during this pandemic, social distancing is being associated with Brahmanical ideas of pure and impure, which is harmful to any progressive society.

The image of Women in Covid-19 and Post –the Pandemic Social World has emerged with different views and perspectives. However, this general and common sense understanding is required for an in-depth search. The poorest of the poor, migrants, laborers, and women faced more problems during the Covid-19 and post-pandemic world. Since the outbreak of Covid -19, it is stated that all types of violence against women and girls particularly domestic violence have intensified and increased in mainstream society or middle-class society. The burden of unpaid care and domestic work has exploded and posed more burdens over the bodies of women. Despite this, what is lived- experiences of tribal women are not so discussed and explored into discourses and debates systemically, thus, this area has scope for revealing the tribal social world post-pandemic.

Statement of the Problem

Tribal Social World is different from the outside world or mainstream society. However, tribes are staying in remote or isolated areas, but they have also negotiated with the outer world. They enter the outside world for physical labor, sell their forest products, and migrate for work and survival. However, tribes are different because of culture, way of life, traditions, and customs. The tribal communities have possessed indigenous knowledge about their social world. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, it has been pointed out that the actual cases of Covid19 are fewer among the tribal communities in comparison to cities or so-called mainstream society. But in another sense, the tribal area is facing the severe secondary impact of the pandemic. Shortage of food, absence of proper medical facilities, increased domestic violence, no precautionary measures are taken, are some of the issues tribal women face. The Covid -19 pandemic had left adverse impacts on society; however, these impacts are varied across the social groups. In this context, this study will focus on the social world of tribal communities during and after the post-pandemic era. Some relevant questions are going to be answered in this research.

Research Questions

1) What is the impact of the Covid -19 Pandemic on the overall health of Tribal Women?
2) Is there any correlation between Reverse Migration and the spread of Covid 19 in tribal communities?
3) Is there an adverse Impact of social distancing, home quarantine, stigmatization discrimination, and abuse is taking place towards Covid Patients in tribal communities?
4) What were the issues, challenges, and problems faced by tribal women during Covid-19 and the post-pandemic Social World?
5) What are the issues that emerged in the Post-Pandemic Social World of the Tribal Women?

Objectives of the Study

1) To explore the issues, challenges, and problems faced by tribal women in the socio-cultural context of Covid-19 and the Post-Pandemic Social World.
2) To know the impact of corona on the physical and mental health of tribal women.
3) To find out the roles of governmental and Non Governmental Organizations in providing help services to the tribal communities.
4) To access the roles and functions of health systems and functionaries in the tribal communities.
5) To find out the ways, means, and methods of tribal communities to protect from the Covid-19 Pandemics.

6) To provide suggestions to the different functionaries to make a better tribal social world for tribal communities in general and tribal women in particular.

Research Methodology:

Research methodology is logical inquiry. It comprises the methods, perspective, logic, tools, and techniques for the study. However, keeping major research questions and objectives in view, this study attempted to apply a mixed-method approach and explorative research design. However, the research design will be focused on the following units such as; the universe of the study, study area, population, sampling, and tools of the study. The study will try to incorporate a feminist perspective to explore the tribal women's social world.

I.**Universe of the Study**

The universe of this study would be the tribal regions of the Nanded district of the Marathwada region of Maharashtra. The Maharashtra state has 45 tribal communities in the different parts of the state. However, these tribes are scattered in the Gondwana and Satpuda ranges of the state. However, this study will focus on the five tribal communities of the Gondwana region of the Kinwat and Mahur blocks of the Nanded district of Marathwada, a backward region of Maharashtra. This study will be operated in the tribal villages/ communities of the Kinwat and Mahur blocks of the Nanded district of the Marathwada region of the Maharashtra state.

ii. Population of the Study

Maharashtra has 45 tribal communities. It is around 8 % of the total population of the State. However, the Nanded district has identified five tribal blocks such as; Particularly Kinwat, Mahur, Hadgaon, Bhokar, and Himayat Nagar blocks which are known as the tribal belt of Nanded District. This study is going to plan to select tribal communities of the Kinwat and Mahur blocks of the Nanded district. These blocks comprise the representation of tribal communities of this tribal belt such as Bhil, Andh, Pardhan, Kolam, and Gond community, which are announced- scheduled tribe-by government of India. These five tribal blocks are identified under the Tribal Sub-Plan for development. Thus, this area has more provisions and schemes for development by the central as well as state government. This region has a Tribal development Project office at Kinwat to look after the developmental activities of the tribes of this region.

iii. Sampling Method

This study will apply the purposive sampling method. The Sample of the study will be made at two levels, one at the tribal community level and the other will be at the tribal women level. At the first level, tribal villages will be identified based on the tribal representation of

Kolam, Gond, Bhil, Andh, and Pardhan communities of this region. The list of tribal villages are prepared from both blocks Kinwat and Mahur, then, after selection of the tribal villages from these both blocks, tribal households are identified from these villages, then, 40 samples of women will be identified from each tribal community that goes up to as 200 samples for this study. 40 samples from each tribal community will be added as 200 samples for this entire study. Despite these 200 samples selection, 2 case studies will be selected from each tribal community that goes up to 10 case studies of tribal women to explore their life and social world. Instead of this, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions will be conducted with the tribal people, NGOs workers, governmental officers, and health servants from these selected tribal villages of the study area.

iv. Tools of Data Collection

Both primary and secondary sources will be used as supportive information for this study. The interview Schedule will be applied as the main tool for primary data collection from the selected 200 samples of the tribal women of five tribal communities of the study area. 10 case studies will be conducted with the tribal women. In-depth Interviews and Focus Group Discussions will be also used as supplementary tools of data collection. Despite this, secondary sources would be used as supportive information in this study. Informed Verbal Consent will be taken from the tribal women and other stakeholders and participants or informants.

v. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The schemes of data analysis would be developed based on the study objectives and research questions of the study. As was already mentioned earlier the study is going to use a mixed-method approach to gather both quantitative as well as qualitative information from the field. Thus, gathered information from the interview schedule will be analyzed with the help of computer applications such as Excel or SPSS. However, the qualitative data will be analyzed based on identified themes, sub-themes, and discourses in the same areas. Case studies are developed based on the personal and individual experience of tribal women's life world within the social world. Focus group discussion will be applied to explore the common experiences of Covid- 19 Pandemic in their social world. Thus, by using these different tools of data collection, data will be analyzed and interpreted.

Significance of Study

This research has significance for many stakeholders. The major findings would be helpful for the different functionaries such as; policymakers, governmental agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), developmental Organizations, and researchers. In the present context, this study will find out the issues, challenges, and problems faced by local tribal communities, and thus, the study gives suggestions and recommendations to the policymakers to tackle the urgent needs and issues of the tribes. Despite this, this study will develop documents on the social and life world of the local five tribal communities to understand their socio-cultural, educational, health, and development-related issues in the post-pandemic era. This document will also provide field insights and knowledge to the other researcher for further research. Thus, this study has scope, relevance, and significance.

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